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Cassis calls governor's actions in Watkins matter "fiasco"

LANSING – State Senator Nancy Cassis today called Gov. Granholm's actions in regard to the controversy surrounding State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Watkins bewildering, citing a pattern of public flip-flopping by the governor.

"This is simply a fiasco," said Cassis, R-Novi. "One minute, the governor calls Superintendent Watkins a valued member of her cabinet, and the next, she's calling him an ineffective leader. Following his issuing of a report suggesting reforms of the state's educational system, the timing of the governor's comments is questionable at best.

"It appears that because the governor has no authority over his contract, she is trying to forcibly remove him by publicly pressuring him to resign. If removing Watkins, who just weeks ago received rave reviews from the State Board of Education, and appointing a 120 member committee to deal with Detroit's educational system is the type of leadership we can expect from the governor, then Michigan residents cannot have confidence in her ability to lead and get things done for our state's 1.7 million students.

"The governor, Legislature and Michigan residents should have the opportunity to read Superintendent Watkins' report on education reform and have a serious discussion of the issues it raises. The governor's actions have drawn attention to her instead of where it should be – on having a public debate on one of the most important issues facing our state."

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